



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 26 October 2020

by Nick Davies BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/W/20/3257012

Land to the rear of no. 05 Littlemore Road, Littlemore Road, Chalbury Corner, Preston, Weymouth DT3 6LA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr R Genge (Covebrook Homes and Holidays) against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref WP/20/00199/FUL, dated 10 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 25 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing garage/storage unit and replace with new garage/storage unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have used the address of the site as it is set out on the planning application form. Road signs in the area refer to Littlemoor Road, so I have used that spelling in the rest of my decision letter.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is part of a pocket of land that is encircled by existing built development. It lies behind a row of two-storey commercial buildings that face Chalbury Roundabout, and is enclosed on its other sides by the garden boundaries of surrounding houses. Vehicular access is gained via a driveway off Littlemoor Road, through a gap between the commercial buildings and the dwelling to the north. The appeal site itself is the middle one of three small detached garages on the land.
5. The area in front of the garages, which is used for car-parking, is unsurfaced. At the time of my visit there were puddles and an accumulation of leaves from the surrounding trees. There was also some open storage around the buildings, which are quite overgrown by ivy and other vegetation. There is an open electricity substation to the west and the surrounding houses have a range of boundary treatments. Consequently, the area has a rather unkempt appearance. However, from wider views, the garages and low-level

paraphernalia are largely hidden by the surrounding buildings, and the trees on the land provide a pleasant green backdrop behind the frontage development.

6. The proposal involves the replacement of the existing modest garage with a wider, and significantly taller building, which would have a much more dominant impact on the locality. Although the building would be located away from any street frontage, its increased height would result in it being visible through the access drive from Littlemoor Road. From this viewpoint it would be an intrusive feature in the backdrop of trees behind the frontage buildings, which would be harmful to the appearance of the area.
7. The visual impact of the building would be increased by its unusually steep roof form. Although the area is comprised of an assortment of buildings of various designs, the surrounding sloped roofs are at a traditional pitch, which is much shallower than that proposed. I am mindful that the steep roofslope reflects a functional desire to maximise the storage capacity of the building, however it results in a building form that would be out of character with surrounding development.
8. Although the site lies behind buildings, the access driveway connects to a footpath leading to Medway Drive, providing a pedestrian route to the commercial buildings from the residential area to the southeast. The status of this route is not clear from the evidence, but I saw it being used during my visit. Seen at close quarters by users of this route, the uncharacteristic scale of the building would be very apparent. It would tower over the two adjacent garages and would be an imposing structure in this enclosed space, and therefore harmful to its character.
9. Passers-by would also see the curiously designed stairwell enclosure, with its angled wall, shallow-pitched roof, and flat-roofed walkway cutting into the main roofslope. Whilst I understand that an external staircase may give rise to security concerns, the contrived design of the enclosed stairway would result in a building with an incoherent appearance, that would fail to harmonise with adjoining buildings, or the area as a whole.
10. I therefore conclude that the scale and design of the building would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, the development would be contrary to Policy ENV12 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015), which seeks to ensure that development is of high-quality design that complements and respects the character of the surrounding area. The proposal would also fail to meet the aim of the National Planning Policy Framework to achieve well-designed places.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nick Davies

INSPECTOR